

Message Text

SECRET

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44

ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
----- 127688

R 221615Z DEC 75

FM AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4872

INFO AMEMFISSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY DAKAR

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY RABAT

S E C R E T NOUAKCHOTT 2640

EXDIS

NOFORN

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PBOR PFOR MR FR SS MO AG

SUBJECT: SAHARA WATCH: FRENCH ARMS AID

1. FRANCE HAS RESPONDED AFFIRMATIVELY TO URGENT REQUEST FROM MAURITANIAN GOVERNMENT FOR MILITARY ASSISTANCE. HRFRENCH MILITARY AIRCRAFT MEE AT LEAST THREE DELIVERIES OF MACHINE GUNS AND SMALL ARMS AMMUNITION TO NOUADHIBOU LATE LAST WEEK (DECEMBER 16-19). FRENCH AMBASSADOR GAUTIER REPORTED ARMS AID AGREEMENT AND THREE DELIVERIES TO AMBASSADOR DECEMBER 20. GAUTIER UNDERSCORED GIRM REQUEST AND POSITIVE FRENCH RESPONSE ARE BEING CLOSELY HELD WITHIN BOTH GOVERNMENTS, AND FACT OF DELIVERIES CONCEALED TO MAXIMUM EXTENT POSSIBLE.

2. GAUTIER ALSO OBSERVED FRENCH HAVE NO CLEAR IDEA OF WHAT IS GOING ON MILITARILY ALONG 1450 KILOMETER MAURITANIAN/SBARA FRONTIER. HE COMHNTEW WRYLY THAT DESPITE ARMS AID AGREEMENT, FRENCH MILITARY ATTACHE WAS BEING KEPT IN DAARK.

3. EVENING DECEMBER 21, GAUTIER LIFTING CLOSE-HOLD
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INJUNCTION INFORMED VISITING FRENCH NATIONAL MEMBER

OECD SECRETARIAT HHAT "FRANCE WAS ARMING MAURITANIA".

4. ALGERIAN EMBASSY OFFICIALS ARE AWARE OF AND ARE FOLLOWING FRENCH ARMS DELIVERIES VERY CLOSELY. ALGERIAN EMBOFF WONDERED WLFD DDL GRNTXVOETHER "FRENCH KNEW PRICE THEY WERE GOING TO HAVE TO PAY FOR MAKING THESE DELIVERIES", AND SUGGESTED MAURITANIANS DID NOT APPRECIATE DEVASTATING IMPACT ALGERIAN DECISION TO WITHHOLD ASSISTANCE WOULD HAVE ON MAURITANIAN ECONOMY.

4. DEPARTMENT PLEASE PASS APPROPRIATE US MILITARY COMMANDS.

HANDYSIDE

SECRET

NNN

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